

Press Release

## **PETER SELLARS TO GIVE KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THEATRE FORUM CONFERENCE**

**Theatre Forum Annual Conference: A Vital Stage**  
**University Concert Hall, Limerick | June 15 & 16, 2006**

(Dublin, May 15, 2006) Visionary theatre, opera and film director **Peter Sellars** will open the 2006 Theatre Forum Conference with an inspirational keynote address. This is Theatre Forum's third annual conference and will run in Limerick on June 15th and 16th.

The theme of this year's conference is '*A Vital Stage*' and will gather more than 150 delegates from the arts sector to consider current issues affecting those engaged in the creation, presentation and touring of performance art.

As one of the most innovative and powerful forces in the performing arts, Peter Sellars has directed more than one hundred productions across the world. A theatrical visionary, his keynote address will be the highlight of the two day programme of events, curated by Rose Parkinson.

During the conference speakers from Ireland and abroad will join Sellars to offer their own perspectives on the current state of the arts and core, contemporary issues. They will address, among other issues, the challenges of touring; the role of venues in developing work; new directions for new writing; profiles of leading contemporary artists; the curtailment of free expression on stage and the moral responsibility of artists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The conference opens with the Theatre Forum AGM, followed by Sellar's address. There will then be the first of three soapboxes where members can speak freely to issues of concern. On the second day of the conference there will be a panel of artists and commentators discussing *Censorship and Artistic Freedom*. Presented in association with Critical Voices 3 and the British Council, this high-profile panel includes **Stewart Lee**, co-writer and director of *Jerry Springer – The Opera*; **Janet Steel**, director of *Behzti* and **Neal Foster**, Manager of the Birmingham Stage Company.

Following this there'll be a public interview with **Tom Murphy** before delegates chose which of four parallel afternoon sessions they would like to attend. Speakers at these sessions include **Lloyd Newson**, Artistic Director of *DV8*, **Micheál Ó Súilleabháin**, Chair of *Culture Ireland* and acclaimed musician; **Andrew Collier**, consultant producer of *BITE* at the Barbican; playwright & Monsterist **Richard Bean**; and lighting designer **Paul Keogan**.

Delegates can wind down in the evening with a delicious BBQ, a theatrical table quiz, and music from the Brad Pitt Light Orchestra.

## **PROGRAMME OF EVENTS**

### **Panels and Addresses**

#### **Art as Moral Action**

Peter Sellars

Thursday 15 June | 3pm | University Concert Hall

*Presented in association with Critical Voices 3*

In his keynote address to open the 2006 Theatre Forum Conference, Peter Sellars discusses *Art as Moral Action*.

#### **Finding a Stage - The Irish Playwright Abroad**

Stella Feehily & other names to follow

Thursday 15 June | 5pm | University Concert Hall

Ireland has always paid homage to its writers but increasingly new Irish work is being championed away from home. Do Irish companies have resources too limited to harbour new writing, leaving Irish playwrights little opportunity to develop their work in Ireland? This session looks at Irish writing from an international perspective and asks if Irish theatre is equipped to cultivate its own writers.

#### **Asking for Trouble? Censorship & Artistic Freedom**

Neal Foster, Stewart Lee, Conall Morrison, Peter Sellars, and Janet Steel

Friday 16 June | 10am | University Concert Hall

*Presented in association with Critical Voices 3 and The British Council*

A panel of artists and commentators talk about censorship and artistic freedom. In the past year, protests by Sikh groups forced the cancellation of the play *Behzti* at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and death threats were sent to the play's Sikh writer Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti. The 2005 tour of *Jerry Springer The Opera* was derailed by Christian Voice. The controller of BBC2, who had commissioned the broadcasting of the show, was forced to place security guards outside his home. In this climate of religious protests and violent intimidation, how can artistic expression be defended against pressure groups? If our societies are becoming less tolerant, are the arts at risk?

### **In Profile**

#### **Public Interview with Tom Murphy**

Friday 16 June | 12 noon | Performing Arts Room, World Music Centre

One of the most important dramatists of his generation, Tom Murphy has had a major impact on Irish theatre. In a career spanning three decades, he has been a seminal influence on a generation of Irish theatre makers and his distinctive voice remains a major force in the contemporary repertoire. In this special event for the 2006 conference, Tom Murphy talks about his life and work.

## **Soapbox**

### **1) We are not second-class citizens!**

Anne Clarke, Landmark Productions  
Thursday 15 June | 4.45pm | University Concert Hall

### **2) Multi-annual funding – what’s the problem?**

Fergal McGarth, Managing Director, Druid Theatre Company  
Friday June 16 | 11.30am | University Concert Hall

### **3) What do you have to do to get money in this town?**

Padraic McIntyre, Artistic Director, Livin’ Dred Theatre Company  
Friday June 16 | 3.30pm | University Concert Hall

## **Parallel Sessions**

Friday 16 June | 2pm | Irish World Music Centre

### **1) Venues**

Panellists: Alan Rivett | Facilitated by: Claudia Woolgar

What are the benefits for audiences, production companies, and venues in collaborative working? When is a co-production more than just vanity 'badging' for a venue? Using case studies from Warwick Arts Centre, Director, Alan Rivett - in conversation with Claudia Woolgar, Artistic Director, The Source Arts Centre - explores positive reasons for collaborative working between venues and production companies.

### **2) International Touring**

Panellists: Andrew Collier & Micheál Ó Súilleabháin | Facilitated by: Brian Jackson

Micheál Ó Súilleabháin as Chair of Culture Ireland will introduce the agency’s new strategic plan to 2010, particularly as it applies to theatre and dance. He will be followed by Andrew Collier, an experienced international theatre producer who will address some of the perennial questions when it comes to touring internationally.

### **3) A New Direction for New Writing**

Panellist: Richard Bean, playwright | Facilitated by: Thomas Conway

The Monsterists are fighting for the right to be able to stage big work, addressing big issues with big casts. A playwrights’ campaign, Monsterism was formed by writers who felt constrained by the conventions of the studio. Frustrated at the tendency of theatres to allocate small spaces and small budgets for new plays, the movement aims to promote the elevation of new theatre writing from the studio to the main stage.

### **4) Dance in conversation**

Lloyd Newson in conversation with Paul Keogan

Acclaimed choreographer and director of world-renowned DV8 Physical Theatre, Lloyd Newson discusses his approach to making work and DV8’s philosophy of risk taking and innovation with designer and Abbey associate artist Paul Keogan in this rare opportunity to gain an insight into the methods and motivations of one of today’s most inspiring and sought after artists.

## **PRACTICAL DETAILS**

### **Accommodation**

Theatre Forum has arranged a special deal of €40 per delegate per night for their own double bedroom and bathroom in Dromroe Village on the University campus. Breakfast is included in the price. Accommodation is also available at the nearby Castletroy Hotel where Theatre Forum has negotiated a special rate of €115 per person for a standard deluxe room.

### **Transport**

UCH is situated in the Foundation Building on the *University of Limerick* campus, outside Limerick city. There is limited parking available near the building. Theatre Forum has arranged pick-up and drop-off to and from Limerick train station for certain trains.

### **How to Book**

Conference costs €75 for members of Theatre Forum, €90 for non-members. Prices do include lunch on both days but do not include transport or accommodation.

More details on the conference at

<[http://www.theatreforumireland.com/index.php/tf/annual\\_conference\\_2006](http://www.theatreforumireland.com/index.php/tf/annual_conference_2006)>

## **WHAT IS THEATRE FORUM?**

Theatre Forum is the representative association for the performing arts. Membership includes all the theatres and arts centres around the country; professional theatre, contemporary dance and opera production companies, and the main arts festivals. Theatre Forum acts as a voice for the community to government, state and semi-state agencies and elected representatives.

The organisation also organises training and professional development courses and seminars. Its website [www.theatreforumireland.com](http://www.theatreforumireland.com) is an invaluable resource containing fact sheets and model contracts, an opening night clash diary, an industry employment page, a barter page for stage managers, a members notice board etc.

**For further information 01-8746582 | [theatreforum@ireland.com](mailto:theatreforum@ireland.com)**

**/ends**

## **FOR FURTHER MEDIA INFORMATION**

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